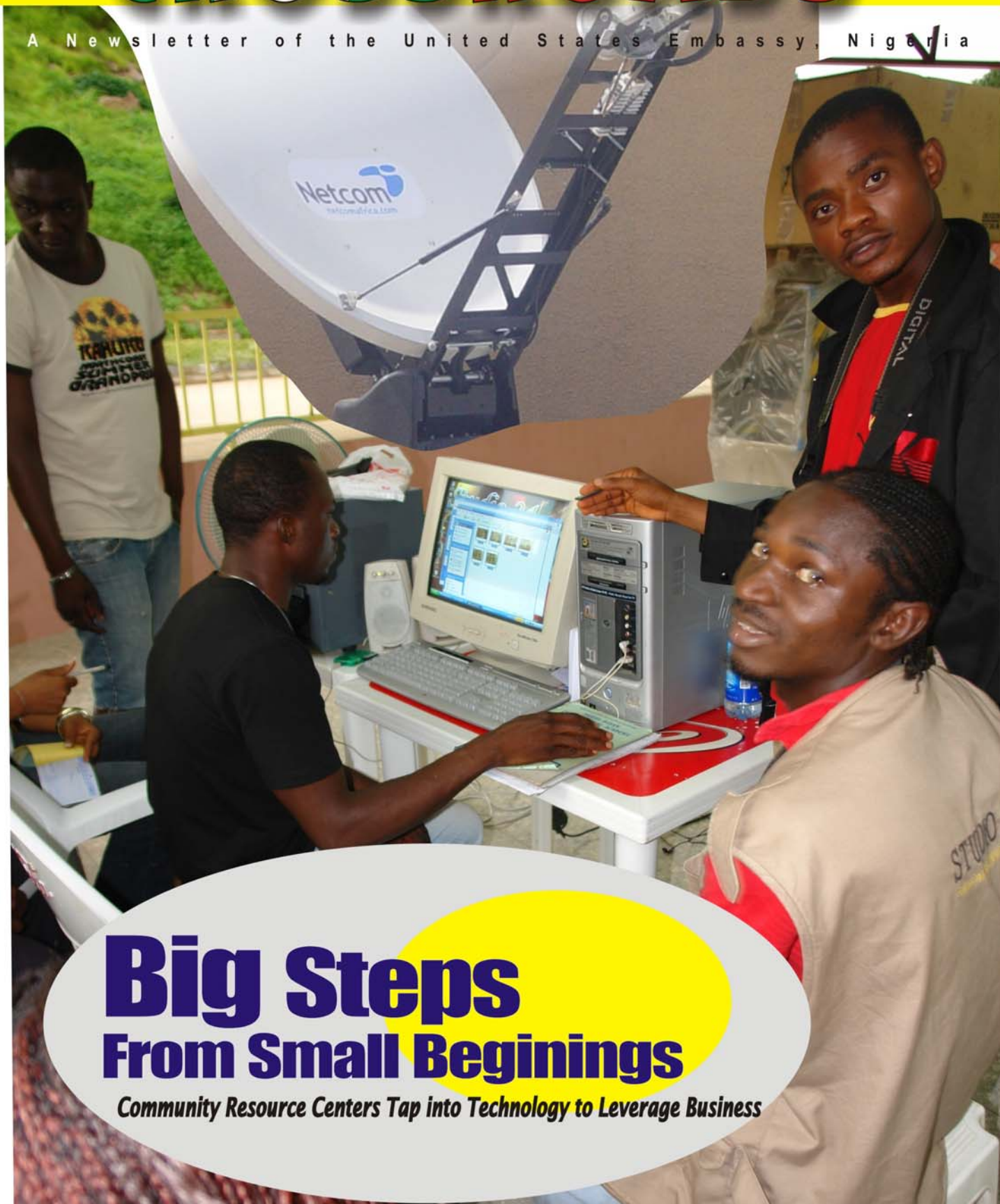


April  
& May  
2007

# CROSSROADS

Vol. 14  
Number 2

A Newsletter of the United States Embassy, Nigeria



## Big Steps From Small Beginnings

*Community Resource Centers Tap into Technology to Leverage Business*



# Ambassador Campbell Fetes Election Observers

**U**.S. Ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell on April 18, 2007 hosted a reception for the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI), who were in Nigeria to observe the 2007 general elections. Prominent human rights organizations, civil society groups and several representatives from the diplomatic community attended the reception. Madeleine Korbel Albright, former Secretary of State and Chairman of the Board of Directors of NDI, led the NDI delegation while Ambassador Pierre-Richard Prosper, former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes led the IRI mission. Below are photos taken by *Crossroads* Editor Idika U. Onyukwu and Sani Mohammed at the reception and a post-election press conference by NDI.



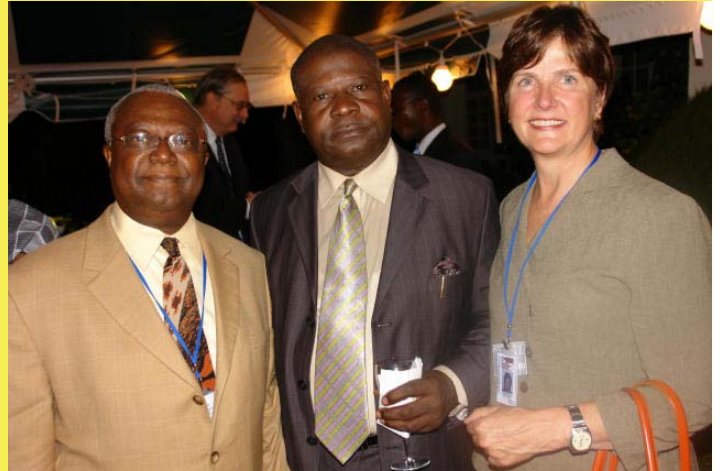
Ambassador John Campbell making his welcome remarks.



Ms. Albright expresses "deep concerns" on the widespread abuse of the 2007 elections during a post-election press conference.



Ambassador Campbell introduces Edna Ismail of Djibouti to the Head of NDI Delegation and former SECSTATE Madeleine Albright.



(L-R) Former Liberian President Amos Sawyer, Konah Blackett, Charge d'Affaires Liberian Embassy and NDI Carol Sharer.



Front row left to right, David Angell Canadian High Commissioner, Akio Tanaka Japanese Ambassador to Nigeria and Dr Rudolph Stewart U.S. Embassy Information Officer.



USAID Mission Director Patrick Fleuret, Christopher Fomunyoh, NDI Senior Associate for Africa, Dr Keith Jennings NDI Country Director and a guest at the reception.

## Ambassador's Note



U.S. Ambassador  
John Campbell

In the aftermath of Nigeria's disappointing general elections, I would like to begin by encouraging all Nigerians to seek peaceful and constitutional methods to redress their grievances over the outcome of the April 14 and 21 elections. While the United States deeply regrets that Nigeria missed

## Communities and Information Technology

an opportunity to strengthen its democracy through a sound electoral process, we are encouraged that on May 29, Nigeria will experience its first civilian-to-civilian transfer of power.

Having said that, let me introduce this issue of CROSSROADS which focuses on a unique partnership between Community Resource Centers and small scale businesses. Using information technology (IT), individuals and communities are expanding their business opportunities which is yet another element of a vibrant democracy. The U.S. Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) hosted a timely Computer, Technology and Office Equipment (CTO) exhibition from May 7 – 11 in Lagos, and IT experts from the U.S. and Nigeria discussed practical approaches to expand small and medium scale investments in the country. (see page 11).

The Embassy continues to provide opportunities for Nigerians to travel to the U.S. especially in view of the facts that travel to the U.S. by Nigerians continues to grow at a phenomenal rate. This issue of CROSSROADS provides useful information on the visa process and includes typical Visa Wait Times for nonimmigrant visa applicants (see page 10). An interesting article in this issue demonstrates the Nigerian spirit to excel despite great challenges. Anthony Odaro Omusi, a student-member of the Educational Advising Center of the U.S. Consulate General Lagos, received the highest over-all results in the last WAEC examinations conducted in five West African country including Nigeria (see page 16).

I will like to end with an education related article, and one of immense concern to this mission. CROSSROADS tells the story of the preservation of Nigeria's historic manuscripts. In collaboration with Arewa House in Kaduna, the Embassy, hosted a conference on preserving Nigeria's rich Islamic manuscripts heritage through digitization and other techniques (see page 15.) Also, Mohammed Umar, a secondary school teacher from Bauchi State is currently teaching Hausa at **Gonzaga University** as part of the U.S. Department of State's Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) program. He writes of his American Experience from Gonzaga University in the U.S. (Page 15).❖

## CROSSROADS

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*A class undergoing the Microsoft Unlimited Potential program at the Bola Ige Information Technology Center, Abuja*

## Communities Tap Microsoft's Unlimited Potentials

*By Idika U. Onyukwu  
Editor, Crossroads*

**F**or visually impaired Philomena Nwanze, who works for Radio Nigeria, finding a business that provides relevant computer skills to physically challenged persons at an affordable cost was an uphill task until she met Manny Emecheta, Director of the Bola Ige Information Technology Center (BIITC) Abuja, who introduced her to the Microsoft Unlimited Potential (MUP) program. After two weeks of intense hands-on computer training at no cost to Nwanze, fondly called 'Philo' by her friends, has not only mastered practical computer instructions that improved her job skills, but has also received a \$3,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to pursue an advanced

technology acquisition program in New York.

Nwanze's economic fortune turn-around is the outcome of a new deal between Microsoft and six U.S. government-funded Community Resource Centers located in Abeokuta, Bauchi, Calabar, Enugu, and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The Centers located in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria are to benefit from a grant totaling \$90,000 under a special information technology (IT) acquisition program tagged "Microsoft Unlimited Potential program (MUP)." About 1,500 persons are to be trained in these six zones over a six month period. According to Manny Emecheta, who initiated and coordinates the program, the Microsoft Unlimited Potential

program is a global community-based learning initiative focused on extending IT skills and economic opportunities to enable young people and adults to realize their potential. Through cash grants, software donations and specialized curriculum, MUP supports projects around the world, creating ample opportunities that can transform communities and help bring the benefits of technology to more than 250 million underserved people.

With the MUP program, BIITC Abuja and five Community Resource Centers, will teach IT curriculum in a hands-on style to equip participants with critical twenty-first century workforce skills required by employees, and be able to set up small or medium scale businesses anywhere in Nigeria. "No participant

goes through this program without experiencing a noticeable transformation in his or her economic potential,” Amecheta said.

Such life changing opportunities are visible at the BIITC Abuja. Already, Abuja, which serves as the control center for the program for the North Central zone, has trained 52 physically challenged persons including 6 lawyers from the Ministry of Justice. Philomina Nwanze is one of them. Everyday at the BIITC, a class consisting of 12 participants goes through the MUP program taught by Microsoft certified instructor Mr. Farouk Musa. Amecheta says the Abuja Center program is designed for three categories of people; the physically challenged, women in Shea Butter business and women in the local fabric making business. “We provide skills to meet these target group’s immediate needs, using two-week intensive computer training course at no cost, to improve their ability to compete economically in their different fields of endeavor.”

Amecheta also said that “The proximity of the Bola Ige Center to the International Women Development Center is a big plus for us. As tenants to the Center, we are uniquely placed to organize women involved in the Shea Butter business including their counterparts in the weaving industry into participating in this program.”

“We know that if we equip these women with IT skills, especially the use of Internet, it is more likely they would use their new IT skills to network with the global market and get better value for their products,” Amecheta pointed out.

Technology in all its forms has tremendous potential to connect communities, address crucial pieces of the global economic information puzzle, and facilitate healthy, sustainable growth. The key to the MUP program is to apply it strategically and thoughtfully, in a way

to suit each individual’s unique need.

### COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTERS

The Bola Ige Information Technology Center Abuja, like its counterparts in Abeokuta, Bauchi, Calabar, Enugu, and Kaduna is a part of a six unit structure in which the MUP program is currently being used to improve the lives of community members in different parts of Nigeria. A primary consideration for establishing the Community Resource Centers (CRC) by the United States government under the Education for Development and Democracy Initiative (EDDI) program in 1998 was to provide the right platform for information technology training and computer appreciation. The CRCs target beginners and seek to train them through to more advanced

are also making progress. Enugu is currently preparing to launch its MUP program targeting motor-parts dealers and market people as core participants. Although the program has not taken off yet, Ms. Judith Ginika Azionu, Director of the South East Community Resource Center in Enugu, says plans are in place to create a pool of spare parts dealers and market people from Ogboete Market who will be trained to use the Microsoft Unlimited Potential module in furthering their businesses.

The North East Community Resource Center presents a unique application of the Microsoft Unlimited Potential program. Under the direct supervision of Hajia A’isha Mu’azu, Center Director for the Professor Iya Abubakar Community Resource Center Bauchi, 45 women



*Microsoft Certified Instructor Farouk Musa guides David Ombugadu a participant at the Abuja Center through the Unlimited Potential program .*

levels. Before the CRCs were officially handed over to the Federal and State governments on September 18, 2004, the units were managed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Centers are now funded by the Federal Government and supervised by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development.

Mr. Amecheta says other centers

in *Purdah* are undergoing eight weeks of intense IT training. These women receive training in desktop publishing using PageMaker, CorelDraw, or Microsoft Publisher, to produce a wide array of publications. “From 9.00 a.m. – 12 p.m. three days a week, we are teaching women in *Purdah* how to produce wedding cards, business cards, invitation cards as well as typing of academic projects

# Locate a Community Resource Center Near You

**L**ocated in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria, the Community Resource Centers (CRC) provide opportunities, tools and strategies to develop new skills in pursuit of long-term self sufficiency and personal sustainability. The Centers have state-of-the-art facilities equipped with computers, high speed internet access, video conferencing and provide other ICT business services. Each center offers computer training courses to members of the public. Access to the facilities is free.

Also, each of the CRCs has an American Corner. In American Corners, you will find information about American society, culture, policies, politics, history and business. You can find out how to study in the U.S., visa information, videos, facts and statistics, and the Internet. You will also receive help in using the resources.

American Corners are partnerships between the U.S. Embassy and the host institution.

Below are the contact details of six of the Centers:

## **Abeokuta**

Community Resource Center  
Kudirat Abiola Complex  
IBB Blvd. Oke Mosan, Abeokuta  
0803-727-0666, 0803-373-4789  
<http://abeokuta.crcnigeria.org/>

## **Abuja**

Chief Bola Ige Information  
Technology Center  
National Center for Women  
Development  
Central Business District, Abuja  
234-09-234-3343, 671-5939  
<http://abuja.crcnigeria.org>

## **Bauchi**

Community Resource Center  
State Library Complex  
Abdulkadir Ahmed Road G.R.A  
Bauchi



077-544-801/2

<http://bauchi.crcnigeria.org>

## **Calabar**

Community Resource Center  
Women Development Center  
Ekpo Archibong Street  
Mariam Extension, Calabar  
087-238-9020/2

<http://calabar.crcnigeria.org/>

## **Ibadan**

Nigerian Society for Information,  
Arts, and Culture  
Leventis Building  
54, Magazine Road  
Jericho, Ibadan  
0903-324-6604, 02-241-2422

## **Jos**

University of Jos  
11 Murtala Mohammed Way

## **Jos**

0703-611928 or 0803-589-4100  
[unifosamcorner@yahoo.com](mailto:unifosamcorner@yahoo.com)

## **Kaduna**

Community Resource Center  
Women's Multipurpose Center  
9, Bank Road  
Off Ahmadu Bello Way, Kaduna  
0802-346-3263

<http://kaduna.crcnigeria.org/>

## **Kano**

Kano Library Board  
Murtala Mohammed Library  
Complex  
Nasarawa Kano  
P.M. B. 3094, Kano  
064-648923 or 0803-589-5338  
Email: [kanolibraryboard@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:kanolibraryboard@yahoo.co.uk)

## **Port Harcourt**

Center for Advanced Social Science  
13, William Jumbo Street  
Old GRA, Port Harcourt  
084-237-323



for undergraduates or business proposals for a fee. That way, these women stay in the comfort of their homes making money for themselves,” Mu’azu said happily. Mrs. Ma’azu also says the training will help eliminate “seasonal trading” in Bauchi where women move from “Kunu” (dairy milk) during the farming season to Ice-Blocks during the hot season. “For those receiving our computer skills training in Desktop Publishing, business will be year round. If someone is not wedding today, another might just need a business card or an invitation for an occasion.

“And for the highly educated people, the new computer skill is an expanded opportunity to propagate their knowledge as publishers using newsletters and on-line magazines,” said Ma’azu. Amecheta acknowledged that there are PhD holders who are in *Purdah* and “such a vast reserve of knowledge will readily become available to the public if the Microsoft Unlimited Potential program can teach computer skills to these unique women,” Amecheta added.

### TECHNOLOGY READINESS

Economists and policymakers agree that investments in technology

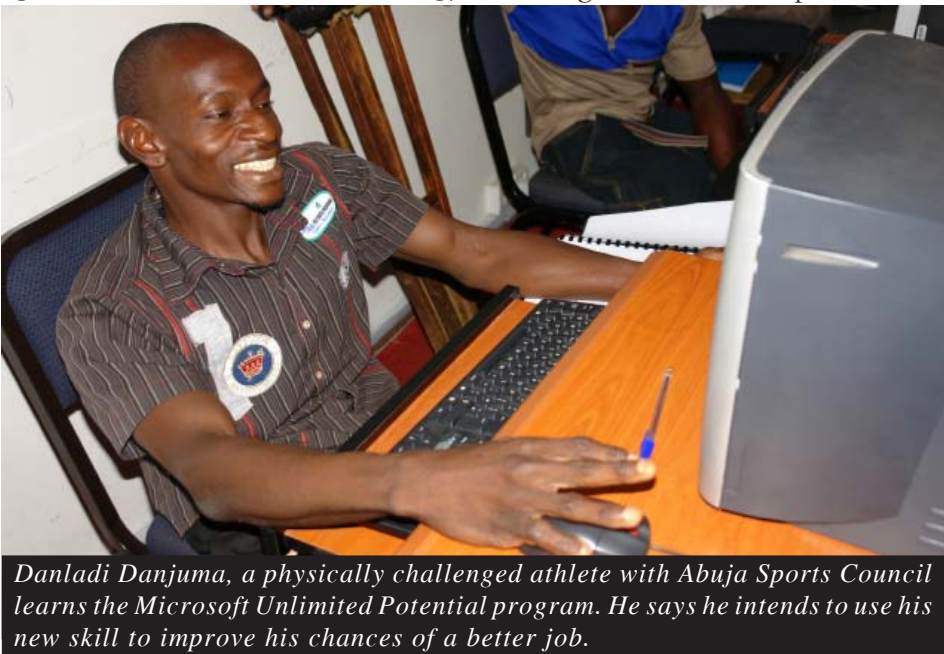


*At the signing ceremony of Microsoft grant of \$90,000 to six Community Resource Centers, (L-R) Tunde Kuku (Abeokuta), Obo Ukpabio (Calabar), Okey Ikpe (Microsoft Public Sector Manager), Judith Azionu (Enugu), and Mamman Danka (Kaduna), share a happy moment.*

are crucial to economic growth and development. When ranking the economic strength of nations, the World Economic Forum’s Global Competitiveness Index considers nine factors that are critical to promoting productivity and supporting national competitiveness. One of these factors is technological readiness. An evaluation of these nine factors in a range of countries indicates that emerging markets still face many challenges in achieving substantial, sustainable economic development due to the lack of technology readiness. Despite India’s impressive recent growth, for example, it is still

only the 43rd most competitive economy in the world, held back by challenges in infrastructure and primary education. Russia also ranks below its economic peers in primary education, while China and Mexico fall behind in higher education, despite ranking high on other factors. Similar patterns emerge in a number of other countries, including Nigeria.

Technology can play a key role in improving each of these critical factors. It can enable government institutions and community services to become more efficient and transparent. Technology can help promote productivity, market efficiency and more effective business practices, contributing to economic growth. Wide deployment of computers, software and recently the pervasive use of GSM telecommunications in Nigeria is helping to increase efficiency and reduce transaction costs across all segments of the economy. Computers, mobile devices and software can vastly improve the quality and efficiency of healthcare and help increase the availability of quality education at every level. The MUP provides an opportunity to achieve a bright future.



*Danladi Danjuma, a physically challenged athlete with Abuja Sports Council learns the Microsoft Unlimited Potential program. He says he intends to use his new skill to improve his chances of a better job.*

### FOCUS ON AGOA

In the South West zone in

Abeokuta, where the “Tie and Dye” is a traditional business, the Microsoft Unlimited Potential module has been factored to meet the challenges of production. According to the Center Director Tunde Kuku, four batches each consisting 50 participants are going through a two-week IT program in basic computer fundamentals, word processing and Internet usage. “The training is such that it is compatible to the participant’s kind of business and some of them do not even believe we are offering this training program free of charge,” Kuku said. Abeokuta is home to the traditional Tie and Dye business employing a large number of inhabitants. The dyed clothes are popularly called Ankara in its finished form and have dressed thousands for many years. It is a primary export of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) promulgated into law by the Clinton Administration. Enacted May 18, 2000, AGOA seeks to encourage increased trade and investment between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa. It reduces tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade. More than five years in existence, AGOA has remained for many Nigerian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) an opportunity largely untapped. The MUP program in Abeokuta has a curriculum to tap into this with the teaching of Trading Management as a bonus subject to all participants. “This course will teach participants how to compete in the global market,” Kuku added.

Participants are guided on how to create a company web site, and how to open folders for different business clients with the aid of a computer. Asked how people who lack basic computer knowledge can acquire such a skill in two weeks. Kuku enthusiastically retorted that this is not the first time the Center was working with people with no computer knowledge or background.



*Women in **Purdah** undergo six weeks of IT training at the Professor Iya Abubakar Community Resource Center, Bauchi under the Microsoft Unlimited Potential program.*

“We have done this kind of thing before and are quite familiar with the initial difficulties, but by and large we have always succeeded in imparting the right kind of skills to our students and that is what this Center is noted for.” Luckily for Mr. Kuku, a sizeable number of the Abeokuta participants of the MUP program are university and polytechnic graduates who after several years of seeking paid employment, have decided to create their own employment. Taking the advantage of IT skills, these

participants are expected to become more efficient conducting business, especially sourcing global markets for their traditional dyed clothing business.

Nigeria is yet to maximize its quota of local textile exports under the AGOA agreement. Mr. Kuku hopes that perhaps the MUP program will provide participants in the South West Center opportunities to leverage the benefits of AGOA. “The Abeokuta Center is conscious of the untapped resources of AGOA and Nigeria’s uninspiring position in the list of countries benefiting from AGOA in Africa. Through this program, efforts are being made to focus participants on how to tap the huge trade potential that AGOA holds,” Kuku concluded.

While the rest of the Centers prepare to launch their Microsoft skill acquisition program, the African proverb that says give a man (women) a fish and you feed him/her for one day but teach him/her how to fish, and you feed such a person the rest of his/her life, becomes apt with those participating in this unique partnership between Microsoft and Nigerian communities.❖



*Manny Amecheta, Center Director Bola Ige Information Technology Centere Abuja.*





*U.S. Consul General Brian Browne (right) joins Fidelity Bank Managing Director Reginald Ihejiabi and U.S. Commercial Attaché Hannah Kamenetsky to happily declare CTO 2007 open in Lagos.*

## CTO 2007 Highlights Self Entrepreneurship

*By Ayodele Durodola  
U.S. Consulate General, Lagos*

**A**ll roads led to the Muson Center in Lagos Island, on May 7, 2007, as Nigeria's no 1 technology marketplace; Computers, Technology and Office Equipment Exhibition popularly known as CTO, took off. It was the beginning of a weeklong event featuring an exhibition and seminars focusing on Nigeria's technology potential and business models to unleash them.

The event was declared open by U.S Consul General Brian Browne who remarked that "CTO has a habit of becoming bigger and better each year and I hoped that all the participants will find fulfillment in the event".

In her own reaction, Hannah Kamenetsky; U.S. Embassy Commercial Attaché said "CTO is about empowering people to become

entrepreneurs and also building capacities at all levels and about bringing people to Muson Center (the event venue) to showcase American computers."

However, Senior Commercial Specialist, Anayo Agu stated that the US Commercial Service partnered with Fidelity Bank for the personal financing seminar on "transiting from selfless service to self employment." The partnership was also informed by their (Fidelity Bank) concern with the estimated 30,000 Nigerians who graduate yearly into unemployment, even though many of them are employable.

Corroborating Agu's remarks, Managing Director Fidelity Bank; Reginald Ihejiabi said his bank recognizes the need for Nigerians to see retirement not as the end of the road but as the beginning of self discovery, thus partnering with US Commercial Service is a noble effort, also taking into consideration the need for a technology driven economy, it's a venture worthy

enough.

CTO 2007 featured a list of top flight financial and IT institutions, consulting firms' who delivered papers at the week-long seminar and exhibition. It also attracted top managers like Jim Ovia of Zenith Bank, Cecelia Ibru of Oceanic Bank, Leo Stan Ekeh of Zinox Technologies, Professor Manny Aniebonam of Nigerian Information Technology Professionals in America (NITPA), Reginald Ihejiabi of Fidelity Bank and Tony Elumelu of UBA Group, all of whom delivered lectures at the event seminar sessions.

This year's CTO theme was "using technology to facilitate micro, small and medium enterprises development in Nigeria".

"It has really helped me respect the IT industry in Nigeria and also the seminar sessions were amazing" said a participant at the event. "I'll definitely come back next year" he concluded.

The next CTO is scheduled for May 8-12 2008.❖

# A Memo on Election Workshop

By Emmanuel Iffer  
*The Abuja Inquirer*

*Emma Iffer of The Abuja Inquirer participated in a five-day Media Empowerment Workshop on the 2007 general elections. The workshops were organized by the U.S. Embassy in collaboration with Ruyi Communications and Bank PHB. In this report Emma writes about the lessons learnt and how the knowledge from that workshop assisted his election coverage.*

**Editor's Note:** All views expressed are entirely that of the writer and do not represent or reflect US Government opinion.

Since attaining self rule in 1960, Nigeria, Africa's largest nation, is for the first time witnessing a civilian-to-civilian transfer of power. The election that has brought about this achievement was no doubt been marred in controversy and described by both local and international observers as severely flawed.

Days before the elections, not many Nigerians and their foreign friends were sure about the possibility of the elections been held at all. It was almost certain that the 2007 polls would go the way of previous attempts at sowing the seeds of democracy. The 2007 elections generated a lot of interest among the international community with several international organizations willing and ready to ensure that Nigerians do not miss this opportunity. The interest is understandable, considering the leadership and peace keeping roles Nigeria plays in West Africa and the whole of the African continent, which won the acclaim of both the United States and the United Nations. The stability of Nigeria is the stability of not only the sub-region but also the entire continent.

As part of thier capacity building,



*U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas Furey making his opening remarks at the Media Empowerment Workshop on the 2007 general elections in Abuja.*

the Embassy of the United States of America (USA), in conjunction with Lagos based Ruyi Communications Ltd, brought together journalists in Lagos and Abuja for two weeks Media Empowerment Workshops on the 2007 elections in March.

Resource persons were also drawn from experienced professional journalists who had worked in both Nigeria and the United States. The workshop began with an overview of Nigeria's experience in her march towards democracy, specifically, looking at issues and challenges following the 1999 and 2003 elections and assessing the media climate in 2007.

A team of top Nigerian journalists including Doyin Abiola, former Managing Director Concord Group of newspapers, John Momoh, C.E.O Channels Television, Gold Oruh, former Executive Director News NTA, and others who have had years of experience covering and reporting past elections in the country, served as resource persons.

Participating journalists discussed such topics as: "Role of Media in Elections: Taking control of the Election Coverage Plan." And:

"Typology of Stories: Creating an election coverage plan with the US media specialists Mike Beardsley, Steve Coon and Arnold R. Isaacs, who have had many years covering elections across different regions of the world, including their home nation, US.

The workshop also dealt with the issues of obstacles to free and fair elections in Nigeria and possible solutions, as well as fairness, accuracy and balance in election coverage. Journalistic ethics as they relate to election coverage and where to draw the line between fact and opinion were also extensively discussed.

Participants were also encouraged to take careful notes of promises made by candidates vying for elections and to make them accountable to the people in fulfilling their campaign promises.

In his opening address, Tom Furey, Charge'd' Affaires of the US embassy reminded the journalists of the centrality of their role in promoting an election that would be free but fair and that they should act responsibly in discharging their assignments, the consequences of which could extend beyond the





*Emmanuel Iffer posing a question to the Trainers at Media Empowerment workshop sponsored in collaboration with Ruyi Communication and Bank PHB.*

borders of Nigeria.

Some of the most interesting features of the training was the practical nature of the workshop, which involved interviews conducted outside the lecture rooms, and separate sessions for journalists from print, television and radio.

For many participants, including this writer, the training was very useful

in the coverage of the 2007 elections and the acquired skills did greatly contribute to the level of peace that still reigns in the country, despite the failure of the elections to reflect the general will of the Nigerian people.

The mature and professional manner in which my colleagues and I reported the elections may have been responsible for reducing the tension

and apprehension after the April polls.

Certainly, the result of the two capacity building training workshops sponsored by the US mission in Nigeria for media practitioners was perhaps the most important contribution the U.S. Government has ever made towards the growth of democracy in Nigeria.❖

■ <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> ■



*Workshop participants pose with Nigerian and U.S. instructors after receiving their certificate of participation in Abuja.*



## How Long Should I Wait?

**A**dvanced travel planning and early visa application are important, since visa applications are now subject to a greater degree of scrutiny than in the past. If you plan to apply for a nonimmigrant visa to travel to the United States, you can determine how long you will have to wait for an appointment by consulting the box below - "Abuja Visa Wait Times."

It is important to thoroughly review all information on the Embassy's Consular Section web page at <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> for procedures and instructions, such as how to make an interview appointment. This website explains any additional procedures for students, exchange visitors and those persons who need an earlier visa interview appointment.

You will also want to know how long it will take for your non-immigrant visa to be processed at the Consular Section after a decision is made by a Consular Officer to issue the visa, and when the visa is available for pick-up. Again, see the "Wait Times for a Nonimmigrant Visa to be Processed" information below, which **does not include time required for special clearances and administrative processing**. Some visa applicants require additional clearances or administrative processing, which requires additional time. Special clearances are usually resolved within 30 - 60 days of application and applicants are advised of this when they apply. When additional special clearances or administrative processing is required, the timing will vary based on the individual circumstances of each case. ❖

### Abuja Visa Wait Times:

**T**he US Department of State now publicly posts typical wait times for nonimmigrant visa interviews at US diplomatic/consular posts throughout the world.

As at April 17, 2007, current typical wait times for interview appointments in U.S. Embassy Abuja were as follows:

#### Typical Wait Time (Calendar Days) for a Nonimmigrant Visa Interview Appointment

Visitors Visa: **45 Days**

Student/Exchange Visitors Visa (Excludes: A, G, K, and V):  
**Same Day**

All Other Non-immigrant Visas: **45 Days**

#### Typical Wait Time (Workdays) for a Nonimmigrant Visa To Be Processed: **2 Days**

Visa applicants may consult current wait times in Lagos, Abuja or any other US diplomatic / consular post by visiting the following US Department of State website: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors\\_wait\\_result.php?post=Lagos&x=55&y=19](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/tempvisitors_wait_result.php?post=Lagos&x=55&y=19)

### Nigeria-US Travel Cor

Yr	Africa Total	S. Afr. Rank: 1
96	284	94
98	364	118
99	407	121
00	447	131
01	466	130
02	387	105
03	371	106
04	324	112





Ambassador John Campbell making opening remarks at the two-day international symposium in Kaduna. On the right are dignitaries including HRH Emir of Zazzau who represented the Sultan of Sokoto

## Making Islamic Manuscripts a Literary Heritage in Nigeria

**T**he U.S. Embassy, Abuja, collaborated with the Arewa House, Kaduna, to host a two-day International Symposium from March 5-7, on *Preserving Nigeria's Scholarly and Literary Traditions and Arabic Manuscripts Heritage*.

The symposium examined measures to preserve Nigeria's scholarly manuscripts and the use of information technology to maintain critical manuscripts and supporting documents that form the essence of Nigeria's scholarly and literary traditions and manuscript heritage.

Prominent Muslim leaders, distinguished scholars and elected officials, including the Emir of Zazzau, who represented the Sultan of Sokoto, Governors Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi of Kaduna State, and Saminu Turaki of Jigawa State as well as the Vice Chancellor of the Ahmadu Bello University, Professor Shehu U.

Abdullahi participated in the opening ceremony on Wednesday, March 7th. Other participants included two U.S. experts on digitization of manuscripts; Dr. Angel Batiste, Area Specialist, Africa Section, Library of Congress, Washington DC and Oghenetaja Okoh, a U.S. Fulbright Scholar and Research Consultant for *Aluka*.

Ambassador John Campbell in his opening remarks, said he hopes that the conference will raise awareness on Nigeria's immense, impressive and significant historical treasures, from which the rest of the world has a lot to learn.

He said a similar project undertaken by the United States Library of Congress, the United States Department of State, the Ford Foundation, and other American organizations to digitize the Islamic manuscripts of Timbuktu, Mali have been successful.

Renowned international scholar and historian, Professor Murray Last and Sheikh Abdel Kader Haidara, Curator of the Mamma Haidara Memorial Library in Timbuktu shared their views on Mali's experience in Islamic manuscript preservation.

Samples of Arabic manuscripts and Islamic calligraphy from different parts of Nigeria, some of which international and Nigerian scholars had the opportunity to view for the first time were displayed at the conference.

In her contribution, Dr. Batiste extolled the virtue of manuscript preservation as a means of sharing knowledge and understanding among a wider scholarly community world wide. She regretted the difficulties in getting owners of literary and Arabic manuscripts to release them to collectors as the major obstacle to cataloguing, preservation and possible digitization of Arabic manuscripts in



Picture left, samples of Arabic manuscript at the National Archives Kaduna. Right, guest speaker Professor Shehu Galadnchi sharing his experience on manuscript preservation at the Kaduna conference, March 7.

Nigeria. This she said arises from the fears of manuscripts owners not willing to share family secrets in the public domain, and loss of unique personal literary treasures.

A public lecture at the American Corner in Abuja preceded the Kaduna conference where Dr. Batiste and Oghenetoja Okoh spoke extensively on the same subject to a large audience of journalists and scholars.

At the public lecture, Ms. Oghenetoja Okoh spoke about the activities of *Aluka* – a U.S.-based not-for-profit organization whose mission is to accelerate the productive use of information technology for the benefit of higher education around the world. She said *Aluka* is currently planning some digitization projects in Africa. “We intend not only to help Africa digitize its manuscripts, but will also build capacity of the institution to maintain the system and give back the digitized materials to owners for distribution.” According to her, access to most of the digitized materials will be free to institutions in Africa while the cost would be borne by institutions from developed countries.

The Kaduna conference produced recommendations and devised strategies that addressed identifiable problems. In endorsing the

manuscript preservation project, Governor Ahmed Makarfi, pledged his support for future conferences in local languages to educate community scholars and scribes on the importance

of donating their private collections to the joint efforts of Arewa House and the Ambassador’s cultural preservation effort.❖

— <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> —

## U.S. Embassy Launches Sokoto Obstetric Fistula Center



Ambassador John Campbell with the Executive Governor of Sokoto State Alhaji Bafarawa, launch the new Obstetric Fistula Center in Sokoto, February 5, 2007.

**U**.S. Ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell, along with His Excellency Alhaji A.D. Bafarawa, the Executive Governor of Sokoto State, on February 5, launched a new Obstetric Fistula center located in the Maryam Abacha Women’s and Children Hospital, Sokoto, Nigeria. The program, funded by United States Agency for International

Development aims to renew the hopes and dignity of thousands of women who suffer from obstetric fistula, a preventable and also repairable health condition. The program was part of a Public Affairs Section Muslim outreach program that also saw the commissioning of the American Corner in Sokoto.❖

— <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> —



# My American Experience

By Mohammed Umar

*Mohammed Umar is a secondary school teacher from Bauchi State. He is currently teaching Hausa at **Gonzaga University** as part of the U.S. Department of State's Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) program. The FLTA program provides opportunity for young teachers of English to refine their teaching skill, increase their English-language proficiency and extend their knowledge of the cultures and customs of the United States while strengthening the instruction of foreign languages at U.S. colleges and universities. Eight Nigerian teachers have so far participated in the program since inception in 2003. Mohammed Umar wrote this piece to share his experiences about the FLTA program at Gonzaga University. Founded in 1887, Gonzaga University is a private Catholic university located in Spokane, Washington.*

**C**oming to the U.S has been the greatest event in my life and has influenced me immensely. The experience and knowledge that I've gained these past eight months in the U.S. are beyond my expectations.

I was born and raised in Bauchi, Nigeria with little or no knowledge of the outside world, and I am very grateful for the opportunities that the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) has provided me. I have benefited immensely from the program, particularly with regards to managing diversity and living in a multi-cultural society.

My participation in the FLTA program has afforded me the unique opportunity of knowing and experiencing different and diverse world views. This has resulted in my having a better understanding of other people which I hope will lead to promoting global peace and justice



Participants of the FLTA program (l-r), Sanad Shah (Pakistan), Mohammed Umar (Nigeria), Farhamaz Rashid (Bangladesh), and Mohammad Salam Khan (Pakistan)

in the world, at least as far as I can influence it.

Now I am proud to say I have friends cutting across 30 countries from different regions, cultures, and religions, all of whom I met here in America, and many of them consider me as a brother.

I have also had the opportunity to travel to several U.S. cities, along with my colleagues from Tanzania, Spain, and Argentina to mention but a few. We crossed the border into Mexico and toured some places which I found very exciting and interesting. The Mexico trip has broadened my horizon about people and cultures. I noticed that a town like Tijuana, a Mexican border town,

**I have learnt so much  
.... which I hope will  
lead to promoting  
global peace and  
justice in the world, at  
least as far as I can  
influence it.**

was very similar to some areas of Nigeria.

The program also gave me the opportunity to study at Gonzaga University; especially how to teach in a multi-racial environment which include various languages, cultures, and personalities. I took a course in broadcasting and television production, as I'm very interested in journalism and broadcasting. At the end of the semester, I possess the skills to now direct a television show or program.

I must acknowledge my sincere appreciation to the dynamic leadership of my supervisor Professor Mark Alfino, who is also my Hausa student. His expertise and wise guidance made this experience much easier for me. He has been very encouraging and inspiring at all levels with his constant support which remains an important factor in helping me cope with life here in the U.S. Likewise, I would also like to thank Gonzaga University and MDI Institute, who encouraged me to ask questions whenever I needed assistance. ❖

— <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> —

# Omusi is West Africa's Best

**A**nthony Odaro Omusi, a 19 year old member of the Educational Advising Center (EAC) at the Public Affairs Section (PAS) -Lagos and a former student of Loyola Jesuit College (LJC), Abuja was the star at the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Council Meeting of the West African Examination Council (WAEC). In 2005, Odaro received the best result ever in the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). From 1,750,000 candidates from five African countries, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Liberia, Gambia and Nigeria. He was declared the best candidate for Nigeria, and the best for West Africa. His result was very impressive as he had distinctions in all eight subjects, Mathematics A1, Hausa Language A1, Biology A1, Physics A1, Chemistry A1, Further Mathematics A1, Technical Drawing A1 and English Language A1.

To honor Odaro for this awesome achievement WAEC invited numerous guests, who included; the President of Nigeria who was ably represented by the Honorable Minister of State for Education, Dr. S.A. Ruma, the Oba of Benin (King of Benin Kingdom) who sent his chiefs, (Odaro is from Edo State, Nigeria where the Oba of Benin is the Traditional Ruler), and Loyola Jesuit College's President, Reverend



*Honorable Minister of State for Education Dr Sayyadi Ruma presenting the award to Anthony Omusi as the proud parents of Anthony watch.*

Father Peter Schineller, and the Vice Principal, Reverend Sister Chika. As his reward for hard work and academic excellence, Odaro received prize money and a plaque.

Father Peter Schineller was ecstatic to be associated with such a brilliant student and promised to maintain the high standard the college is well-known for so more "Odaros" could be honored. His performance did not come as a surprise to his classmates and teachers because he was constantly on the honor roll all through his six years at LJC. The day was a double celebration for LJC as another of its students was honored for getting the third best result.

Odaro is presently studying at the University of Lagos while applying

to US institutions. As an EAC member the two Lagos Advisors recognized his needs and included him on the United States Achievers Program (USAP), a program that identifies highly talented and motivated students who are economically disadvantaged and helps to secure admission and scholarship to US colleges. He has applied to many prestigious US higher education institutions such as Notre Dame University, Trinity College, Tufts University, Duke University, and the University of Denver, for admission in Fall 2007. He plans to major in Electrical Engineering.❖



*US Ambassador John Campbell poses with staff and students of JSS Jikwoyi winners of 2007 SAGE competition.*

## JSS Jikwoyi Wins 2007 SAGE Cup

**U**S Ambassador John Campbell was the keynote speaker at the finals of the Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship (SAGE) championship on Saturday, May 26, 2007 in Abuja. Six secondary schools competed for the coveted position to represent Nigeria at the 6th SAGE World Cup competition taking place in Odessa, Ukraine later in August.

The audience included the Ambassador of Ukraine, Oleg Skoropad, who was the guest of honor. Young and vibrant Junior Secondary School Jikwoyi, Abuja beat last year's winner Gray's International School Kaduna to win the 2007 competition. SAGE in Nigeria, facilitates a culture of entrepreneurship and community service among secondary schools with a view to eradicating poverty.❖





*AISA students welcome guests with their entertaining traditional dance.*

## Welcome to "Our School"

*By Michele Ward  
Embassy Community Liaison Officer*

**G**uests at the dedication ceremony of the new American International School, Abuja (AISA), buzzed with excitement on Thursday March 22nd when Chief Desmond Akwor, Minister of State for Federal Capital Territory (who represented President Olusegun Obasanjo) and former Nigerian Head of State General Yakubu Gowon joined U.S. Ambassador John Campbell to formally dedicate the new AISA.

Distinguished guests, including members of the diplomatic community, parents, members of the local Durumi District community and students, enjoyed a special ceremony held in the Multi-purpose Hall by the students who wore proud smiles even the scorching temperatures could not melt away.

The beating drums captivated the audience while the girls of the fourth grade made their entrance dancing in traditional costumes. A parade of flags followed as students entered carrying flags of the 46 nations represented at the school. Board President Ron Acuff gave the welcome remarks and red, white and blue balloons were passed out to everyone. A thundering applause and

cheers accompanied the students' giggles as balloons were released in unison. The audience was captivated during the Islamic and Christian blessings and Director Amy Uzoewulu sang praises about the new school and dynamics of the diverse student population.

In his remarks, Ambassador Campbell said the completion of the school marks the fulfillment of a vision that started with the desire to offer opportunities for American education to inhabitants of Abuja. The Federal Capital Territory, he said, has become the primary home and headquarters to the diplomatic community, and international organizations. He commended the school for growing exponentially with the fast-paced development that the FCT today reflects. Goodwill messages were delivered by Ms. Onogoruwa, Executive Secretary FCT Education Board (who represented Minister Malam Nasir El-Rufai) and Dr. Adewumi Abitoye, Minister of State for Education (who represented Minister Obiageli Ezekwesili). The third grade (red) class read aloud a writing project from September. It was humorous to hear the students' perceptions during the early days of construction which was not too long ago. Creative works of art by children were presented to the honored guests. The



*Dignitaries cheer after unveiling the school plaque.*



*A Parade of Country Flags by AISA students.*



*White, blue and red balloons released by pupils.*

ceremony concluded with the honored guests unveiling a school plaque. Guests were then able to tour the impressive school grounds and see the location of projected sites for future expansion while enjoying refreshments and mingling with faculty and students.

Hats off to the many individuals who contributed to the success of AISA. ❖





*The Charlie Porter Quartet - Adam Birnbaum, piano; Joseph Lepore, bass; Charlie Porter, trumpet; and Quincy Davis, drums, performing at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Abuja, 3, 2007.*

# The Charlie Porter Quartet

**F**or ten days (February 27 - March 8), music lovers in Abuja, Lagos and Enugu were treated to the best of American jazz by the quartet of Charlie Porter, trumpet; Adam Birnbaum, piano; Joseph Lepore, bass; and Quincy Davis, drums.

The international Jazz Ambassadors were part of the Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad program created by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

In Lagos and Enugu, the Charlie Porter Quartet thrilled audiences from music students, musicians, and jazz enthusiasts to media, young students and the general public at various workshops and three concerts.

During the master class with the



*The Quartet in a master class in Abuja.*

Musical Society of Nigeria (MUSON) Lagos, and the Music Society of Enugu, members of the Quartet took turns talking about their instruments, origins of jazz, harmony, swing, blues, improvisation in jazz, its place in American history, and a discussion of jazz greats. Impromptu jam sessions with Nigerian musicians were an unexpected treat for those participating; a visit to a local school held Enugu children spell-bound; and the three evening concerts provided memorable evenings of American culture and style.

In Abuja, Ambassador John Campbell hosted the group to a cultural presentation in his residence



*The Quartet swarmed by Enugu students.*

attended by Nigerian artists, performers, government officials, military officers and members of the diplomatic corps. A second performance at the DOME, provided an opportunity for university students, journalists, NGO representatives and local musicians to have a feel of a typical American genre of music which is also acclaimed in Nigeria.

Over 160 people attended the performances. An important aspect of the Quartet's tour was the collaboration with local music organizations and the jazz training sessions and master's classes for young Nigerian musicians and students interested in learning more about jazz. These sessions also provided an opportunity for an exchange of artistic practices and expressions among local musicians at all levels, beginners, immediate and advanced, with the U.S. group. Over 150 musicians participated in the workshops, which included lessons on jazz instruments, fundamentals of jazz music and the history of jazz. ❖



## Badagry Community Honors US Diplomat with Chieftaincy Title

History was made on May 19, 2007 when the ancient town of Badagry in Lagos conferred a chieftaincy title to US Embassy Abuja Information Officer Dr. Rudolph Stewart as the ***Fiwagboye of Ilogbo-Eremi*** of Badagry. The revered title which literally translates to 'A man of good character/mannerism,' comes as a fall out of Dr. Stewart untiring efforts in ensuring that the community's economic and nutrition value especially for those living with the HIV/AIDS virus was improved through a fish pond project sponsored by a US-grant. Founded around 1425 A.D, Badagry is noted for its rich traditional culture and one of the oldest slave trading post before the colonial era. Dr. Stewart ends his diplomatic tour in Nigeria at the end of June and leaves to Kenya for his next assignment. Photos were taken by US Consulate General PAS staff Ayodele Durodola. ❖



Market women prepare to purchase fish caught from the US-sponsored Fish pond for the Badagry community.

A woman dancers to the beats from traditional dancers who were entertaining during the the coronation ceremony of Dr. Stewart as the .





### Freedom of Information Bill (FOI)

US Embassy Public Affairs Section, Abuja hosted a Media Roundtable discussion on May 21, where four panelists - Senator Tawar Wada, Chairman, Senate Committee on Information and National Orientation, Honorable Frank Nweke Jr., Minister of Information and Communication, Kehinde Ajoni, Executive Secretary, National Human Rights Commission, and Shu'aibu Usman, National Secretary, Nigeria Union of Journalist, discussed Press Freedom in Nigeria in general, and the fate of the Freedom of Information (FOI) bill in particular. ***Photo shows Ambassador John Campbell making opening remarks with Senator Wada (left) and Frank Nweke Jr. (center) listening with rapt attention.***

June	Calendar of Events	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
							1	2
		3	4	5 Media Briefing (Lagos)	6 Study in the U.S. classes (Abuja & Lagos)	7 Media Briefing (Abuja)	8	9
		10	11	12 Media Briefing (Lagos)	13 Study in the U.S. classes (Abuja & Lagos)	14 Media Briefing (Abuja)	15	16
		17	18	19 Media Briefing (Lagos)	20 Study in the U.S. classes (Abuja & Lagos)	21 Media Briefing (Abuja)	22	23
2007		24	25	26 Media Briefing (Lagos)	27 Study in the U.S. classes (Abuja/Lagos)	28 Media Briefing (Abuja)	29	30

Please note that ALL events on this calendar are STRICTLY by invitation. For enquiries please call 09-461-4000 or 01-263-3395.